

# Fact Sheet

## Title: CARIBOU CREEK RECREATIONAL MINING AREA



Alaska Department of  
**NATURAL  
RESOURCES**

Division of Mining, Land & Water  
April 2004

In 1991, the Alaska State legislature created the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area (CCRM Area). The CCRM Area, which is located near the confluence of Caribou Creek and the Matanuska River, was established to provide a permanent recreational mining experience for the general public.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Mining, Land & Water, is responsible for the management, use and development of the CCRM Area. The Department of Fish and Game is responsible for the management of the fish and game resources within the CCRM Area.

### ***How do I get to the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area?***

The CCRM Area is located at approximately mile 104 of the Glenn Highway next to the Lion's Head rock formation. You will see a sign at the turnoff. A steep trail leads down to the creek from the parking lot. Only pedestrian traffic is permitted on the trail (sorry, no all terrain vehicles—ATV's). Physical fitness, health, and age should be considered due to the steepness of the trail.

### ***What facilities are available in the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area?***

The CCRM Area is relatively undeveloped. The parking lot is gravel. An outhouse is available and there is a trail leading down to the creek. Private facilities offering gas, food and lodging are within 10 miles of the CCRM Area.

### ***Are other activities available within the Area?***

Yes. Hiking, picnicking, photography, wild flower viewing and other activities are permitted within the area, as long as they do not detract from the recreational mining experience. Dall sheep, black and grizzly bears, and gray wolves have been viewed in this area.

### ***Can I mine anywhere within the Area?***

No. First, you should be aware that the area only includes land and water within 100 feet of ordinary high water of the creeks and rivers within the CCRM Area. Public recreational mining is allowed only on state lands without mining claims below the ordinary high water mark of Caribou Creek, its tributaries and the Matanuska River within the CCRM area. Please refer to the map on the back of this sheet for details.

### ***Can I stake a mining claim in the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area?***

No. The CCRM Area is restricted to recreational mining only. No new mining claims are allowed.

### ***What methods of recreational mining are allowed in the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area?***

Recreational gold panning, mineral prospecting, or mining using light portable field equipment, such as a hand operated pick, shovel, pan, earth auger, or a back pack power drill or auger are allowed. If you have a permit from the DNR Office of Habitat Management & Permitting (OHMP), you may use a suction dredge with a nozzle intake of six inches or less, powered by an engine of 18 horsepower or less, and pumping no more than 30,000 gallons of water per day.

Caribou Creek has been specified as being important for the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish. Generally, permits are only issued in the spring, between hatching and spawning. Even though a permit is required – it is free. And, depending on the circumstances, OHMP may issue a blanket permit of the area during this time.

**For additional information on dredging permits, contact:**

Department of Natural Resources  
Office of Habitat Management & Permitting  
550 W 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1420  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone: 907-269-8690

**For additional information on the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area contact:**

Department of Natural Resources  
Public Information Center  
550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1260  
Anchorage, AK 99501-3557  
Phone: 907-269-8400 Fax: 907-269-8901  
TDD: 907-269-8411

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